



San Diego River Conservancy

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John Robertus
Executive Officer
San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
9174 Sky Park Court, Suite 100
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Dear Mr. Robertus:

I understand that the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (SDRWQCB) is willing to consider a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) proposal for \$75,000, as a result of an enforcement action taken in response to a violation that occurred in the watershed of the San Diego River by the San Diego County Water Authority.

The purpose of this correspondence is to express the interest of the San Diego River Conservancy (SDRC) in obtaining these funds to pursue water quality improvement projects in the watershed. The SDRC proposes to work with the San Diego River Park Foundation (SDRPF) and San Diego State University (SDSU) to invest these funds in three projects, two of which would involve a grant to the San Diego River Park Foundation and a third for a project that is being developed with SDRC, SDRPF and SDSU. What follows is a brief description of these three projects:

San Diego River Park Foundation:

The San Diego River Conservancy would provide a grants totaling \$35,000 to expand two of the Foundation projects and cover their administrative costs (\$3500)

1. RIVER BLITZ (\$7500 Field Surveys)

The Conservancy would propose to make a \$7500 grant to expand and enhance the Foundations River Blitz program. Twice a year teams go out and survey the River. These teams of trained volunteers use handheld GPS (Global Positioning System) units to record the precise location of any trash. The trash is also photographed with a digital camera. The volunteers also record selected invasive non-native plants, graffiti, and water quality problems. The surveys are conducted in April and October to create a snapshot of the river from Lakeside to the Ocean. Additionally, once per year the upper portion of the river is surveyed.

The data collected is used to coordinate future trash removal efforts. This work is done in partnership with public agencies, landowners and community-based organizations. Each year the data is used to prepare a Health of the River report. The report is made publicly available. The data is also placed in a web-based clearinghouse so the partners can access and use the data for planning purposes.

2. CLEAN AND GREEN VOLUNTEERS (\$24000 River Clean-Ups)

This grant would fund 12 River Clean-Ups. The Clean and Green Volunteers do the heavy work of removing trash from along and in the River. Events are organized on a regular basis. Typically, these events have between 50 and 125 volunteers. The clean-up locations are based upon data collected through the semi-annual River Blitz field surveys as well as reports received from the public. The Clean and Green Team also works on controlling the problem at its source by providing information about the importance of a clean and healthy river to volunteers and the public. The Team works with property owners and public agencies to address chronic problems.

Additionally, an Action Response Team (ART) stands ready to respond to join urgent needs or smaller projects where a few people can really make a big difference.

San Diego River Conservancy, San Diego River Park Foundation and San Diego State University

3. SAN DIEGO RIVER WATERSHED DATA COLLECTION and RESTORATION PROGRAM (\$40,000)

The San Diego River Watershed data Collection and Restoration Program is collaboration between SDRC SDSU SDRPF are pursuing the development of a project that would address multiple objectives: assist the implementation of the San Diego River Watershed Management Plan; San Diego River Conservancy's Strategic and Infrastructure Plan, and the establishment of a network of wireless environmental sensors. This program would compliment the Foundation's successful, volunteer-driven water quality monitoring and data collection program, as well as their web-based clearinghouse. The project would include the following components:

- Stakeholder engagement: Engage watershed stakeholders, resource and regulatory agencies, and interested parties to inform development, implementation, and management of the Program.
- Data use plan: Identify the data gaps and the end users that have a need for watershed data, the data format required by the end users, and the ultimate uses for the data.
- Data collection plan: Identify the most efficient and effective methods for collecting the data required by the end users, identify sites, and create experimental design
- Maintenance/funding plan: Coordinate with data users to identify a long-term funding strategy for the program.
- Outreach and outreach plan: Formulate a plan for sharing the data with the end users, including the general public.

. The San Diego River Conservancy is willing to assume responsibility for oversight and management of the SEP. Moreover, the aforementioned projects are consistent with its San Diego River Conservancy Act. I appreciate any consideration you may give to this proposal



Michael Nelson
Executive Officer